

13th-14th-15th December, 1962

Paris

Chairman : Mr. D.U. Stikker.

*Cuban missile crisis – Berlin – Political Consultation to be intensified – Disarmament – Triennial Review – Nuclear problems – Defence Ministers meeting on 15th December.*

The regular Ministerial Session of the North Atlantic Council was held in Paris from 13th to 15th December, 1962.

2. Ministers reviewed the international situation. They noted that the Alliance is sound and vigorous, and that the dynamism of free societies continues to demonstrate its advantages in promoting world progress and well being.
3. The recent attempt by the Soviet Union to tilt the balance of force against the West by secretly stationing nuclear missiles in Cuba brought the world to the verge of war. The peril was averted by the firmness and restraint of the United States, supported by the Alliance and other free nations.
4. Ministers also discussed the grave implications of the recent Communist actions in Asia.
5. The aim of the Atlantic Alliance remains what it has always been — peace, freedom, and security based on the rule of law. However, the Alliance is determined to respond appropriately to any hostile action affecting the security and freedom of countries of the Alliance subjected to threats and pressure. Regarding Berlin, the Council recalled and reaffirmed its determination, as expressed in its Declaration of the 16th December, 1958, to defend and maintain the freedom of West Berlin and its people.
6. In the light of their discussions, Ministers concluded that constant vigilance and unity of purpose in a spirit of interdependence, as well as readiness to examine any reasonable possibility of reducing international tension, must continue to guide the policies of the Alliance. It is a prerequisite of any progress towards equitable settlement of outstanding international issues that the Alliance should maintain its defensive strength.

7. Ministers emphasised the value of close political consultation in regard to the constructive tasks of the Alliance, as well as in preparing to deal effectively with contingencies which may arise. They agreed that this consultation should be intensified.

8. The Council reaffirmed that general and complete disarmament, under effective international control, continued to be a question of major concern. It emphasised the importance of reaching an agreement which would step by step bring peace and security to the world. It expressed the hope that the Soviet attitude, which has so far frustrated concrete agreement on any of the key questions at issue, would change.

9. Ministers took careful stock of the threats which face the Alliance and the resources available for defence against them as established in the course of the 1962 Triennial Review. They agreed that it was necessary to increase the effectiveness of conventional forces. They further agreed that adequate and balanced forces, both nuclear and conventional, were necessary to provide the Alliance with the widest possible range of response to whatever threat may be directed against its security. They recognised that a sustained effort will be required to provide and improve these forces. Ministers invited the Permanent Council to review procedures in order to secure a closer alignment between NATO military requirements and national force plans as well as an equitable sharing of the common defence burden.

10. The Council also reviewed the work done over the past six months in the exchange of technical information on nuclear weapons and the study of various suggestions for the further development and co-ordination of NATO nuclear capabilities. They decided to pursue and intensify exchanges in this field to facilitate the continuing review of NATO defence policy.

11. Ministers also noted, in accordance with the resolution taken during the Athens meeting, that in a spirit of solidarity and interdependence, measures had been decided on to assist Greece in solving the special defence problems with which she is at present confronted.

12. At their separate meeting on 15th December, Defence Ministers reviewed the report of the High Level Group established to seek means of obtaining improved co-operation among member nations in research, development and production of military equipment. In approving this report Ministers reaffirmed their will to co-operate and their intention to translate it into positive action at all levels.

13. Ministers noted that the free world had continued to advance towards an ever greater degree of prosperity. Only on the basis of continuing economic expansion can the Alliance foster the well-being of its peoples and provide a sound basis for a defence effort equitably shared among the Allies and commensurate with their economic potential. Furthermore, economic expansion in the West, by facilitating the provision of increased aid and stimulating world trade, is essential to steady economic progress and a rising standard of living in the developing countries.

14. Ministers emphasised their determination to intensify measures to sustain the efforts of those countries of the Alliance which, while making an important contribution to the common defence, at the same time are faced with the urgent problem of speeding up their economic development.

15. Ministers examined a report on national and international civil emergency plans, which are an essential complement to the defence effort.

16. The next Ministerial Meeting of the North Atlantic Council will be held, on the invitation of the Canadian Government, in Ottawa, 21st-23rd May, 1963.